



Dear Parents,

Within the next few weeks, your child will be taking the South Dakota State Test of Educational Progress or *Dakota STEP*. The *Dakota STEP* is the assessment system for accountability in South Dakota schools that assesses basic curricular objectives in reading, language arts, and mathematics.

Test questions are used to assess the South Dakota State Content Standards in reading and mathematics for grades 3-8 and 11, in addition science will be tested at grade 5, 8 and 11, as required by the *No Child Left Behind Act*. The *Dakota STEP* provides updated content that reflects national and state standards, curriculum, and educational trends for the beginning of the twenty-first century.

The *Dakota STEP* is given to students in grades 3 through 8 and 11 in the spring of the school year (March 30- April 17, 2009). The test provides information on your child's performance in various content areas. The results help teachers to plan lessons that build upon what your child already knows and to encourage progress in areas your child has not yet mastered.

This type of test can only give certain kinds of information about how your child is doing in school. To get a more complete picture, you also need to know how your child performs on other tests the teacher gives, daily class work, homework, and other activities. The attached chart lists some suggestions that both you and your child can do to help prepare him or her to take the *Dakota STEP* and other tests.



## HOW TO PREPARE YOUR CHILD TO TAKE A TEST

Here are some things <u>your child</u> can do:	Here are some things <u>you</u> can do:
<b>REST</b>  Get a good night's sleep before the test.	<b>DISCUSS</b>  Help your child understand that The <i>Dakota STEP</i> gives him or her a chance to show what a he or she knows about a subject
<b>EAT</b>  Eat a good breakfast.	<b>SUPPORT</b>  Ask your child to maintain regular study habits. Do not ask your child to give extra study time for the <i>Dakota STEP</i> . The test covers more schoolwork than your child can learn in a few extra hours.
<b>LISTEN</b>  Listen carefully to the directions that are given for the test and follow them exactly. If the directions are not clear, ask the teacher to repeat them or to explain them.	<b>RELAX</b>  Students who are calm and sure of themselves do better on tests.
<b>TRY</b>  Do your best and do not give up.	